

# Application Guideline – DIH Call for Proposal

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## Application Guideline – DIH Call for Proposal

### 1. The Digital Transformation Center, Nigeria (DTC Nigeria) Project

With more than 200 million people, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and already offers some good conditions for an efficient innovation ecosystem that could drive economic development. Nigeria is the largest market for mobile communications and digital products and services in Africa and, especially Lagos, has a diverse scene of young companies, investors and innovation hubs that facilitate the founding phase for start-ups. This environment is to be improved through better networking of the actors, the capacity development of organizations in the innovation ecosystem and the establishment of innovation partnerships with the (international) economy. Nigeria has most of the prerequisites for a dynamic innovation ecosystem. In 2019, the information and communication technologies (ICT) sector contributed close to 14% of GDP. The Nigerian government hopes to double this share in the next 5 years, creating 3,000,000 new jobs. However, cooperation between ecosystem actors is poor and this limits the growth of the sector.

The Digital Transformation Center Nigeria (DTC Nigeria) is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. Its primary focus is on Digitalization and Entrepreneurship. The project aims to contribute to the improvement of the capacity of the Nigerian economy to implement digital innovations for growth, through supporting the digital transformation of the economy and society.

DTC Nigeria aims to improve the capacities of the innovation ecosystem – policy implementation, performance of organisations and networks as service providers for the digital economy, offering scalable digital solutions, competences – for the growth of the digital economy. The project is working closely with Nigerian actors in the innovation ecosystem such as: National Information and Technology Development Agency, research institutions, innovation hubs, hub networks, start-ups, MSMEs and women. This will be achieved through working in the following outputs:

- **Output 1:** By promoting innovation-friendly framework conditions for the digital economy my by improving cooperation between policy actors and actors in the innovation ecosystem from the private sector, science and research as well as civil society;
- **Output 2:** Through the capacity development of selected actors in the innovation ecosystem and promoting cooperation of Nigerian hubs.
- **Output 3:** By promoting innovative digital solutions by building innovation partnerships with (international) business and
- **Output 4:** Through the development and institutional anchoring of a further training format to promote digital and entrepreneurial skills among women.

### 2. What is the objective of the Call for Proposals?

The objective of the Call for Proposals to select DIH consortia and support the establishment of two (2)<sup>1</sup> sector/topic and/or region-specific Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs) in Nigeria. The DIHs are expected to drive the digital transformation of MSMEs and build regional innovation ecosystems around them. In addition, the DIHs will be closely linked to the African and European networks of Digital Innovation Hubs to foster technology and knowledge transfer through collaborating in Pan-African or global research and innovation projects.

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<sup>1</sup> The DTC Nigeria project reserves the right to change the number of supported DIH depending on the quality of submitted applications.

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### 3. What are Digital Innovation Hubs?

DIHs<sup>2</sup> are defined as “a single organization or a coordinated group of organizations with complementary expertise and a public benefit objective offering a set of services and activities that support companies in their digital transformation and innovation efforts acting as a central point of contact/expertise.”

The focus of the DIHs in Nigeria is primarily on MSMEs. The objective of DIHs is to support MSMEs with the uptake of digital and innovative technologies. They are seen as a core mechanism to create a strong, collaborative regional innovation ecosystem through providing access to services, facilities and expertise offered by a wide range of partners. The aim is to ensure that individual MSMEs receive the services they need, that targeted sectors get access to innovative, scalable solutions and that stakeholders cooperate with each other at a regional, national, pan-African and/or international level.

In order to support MSMEs in their digital transformation, DIHs provide a set of services in the following areas (see Fig. 1): The first set of services are the technological services (1), supporting the development of new innovations based on technological infrastructure and expertise. This is often referred to as “test before invest” function but could include everything from testing to support in R&D collaborative projects.

In addition to the technology services, the uptake of technologies also requires business services (2). These will help an MSME to adjust its organization and actions to the market and the changes brought by digitization (including supporting access to finance). DIHs also offers skills and training (3) as another service area. This ensures that their customers have the capacities and capabilities to implement the new technologies. Skills and training are horizontal, covering skills in technology, business and ecosystem related topics.

Lastly, DIHs also function as a connector in the region and offer ecosystem services (4), to boost the regional innovation ecosystem. Focused on a specific technology or thematic area, DIHs bring together different stakeholders in an innovation relay game to ensure a collaborative network of partners, ultimately enhancing the quality of the collaboration in the region.

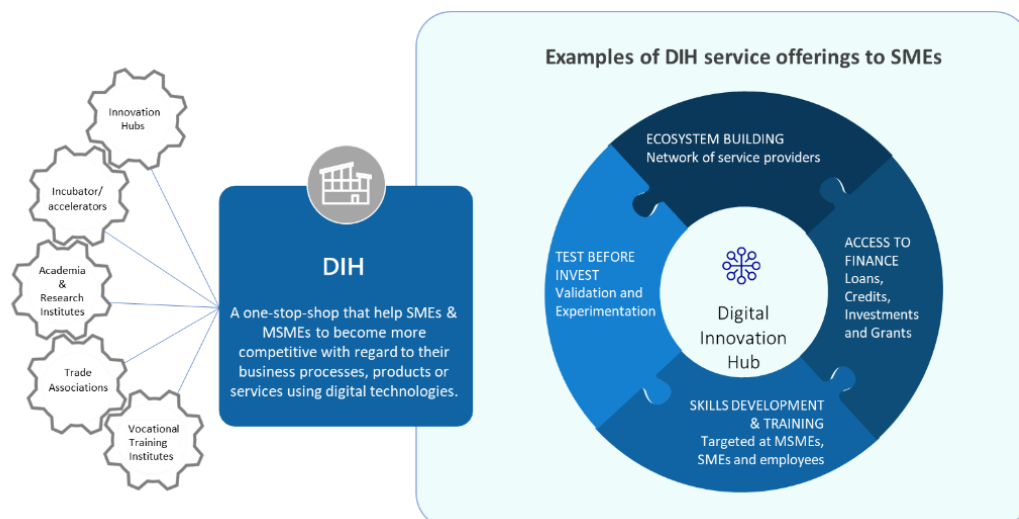


Fig 1: Overview of Digital Innovation Hubs (DIHs) and service offerings. (Adapted from: Kalpaka et al. (2020): Digital Innovation Hubs as policy instruments to boost digitalisation of SMEs)

<sup>2</sup> Kalpaka et al. (2020): Digital Innovation Hubs as policy instruments to boost digitalisation of SMEs.  
<https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC121604>

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It is crucial that a DIH provides this portfolio of services as this will enable them to address the different needs of companies in their digital transformation. An important principle that should be observed in the process of developing a service portfolio for the DIH is that it should not compete with or replace services already provided by existing parties. Rather, the DIH should integrate the services of market providers – while developing, itself, only those services that the market does not provide.

### 4. Are there any limitations towards the sector, topic or technological focus of the proposed DIHs?

No, however, one of the Digital Innovation Hub (DIH) will focus on the Green Economy Sector (Agtech, circular economy or clean tech), while the other sectors will be selected based on demand and/or received proposals.

### 5. What does the DTC Nigeria project offer the selected DIH Consortia?

Through this call for proposal, DTC Nigeria will select **suitable DIH consortia for the creation of Digital Innovation Hubs in Nigeria**; one in the **Green Economy Sector** (Agtech, circular economy or clean tech) and in other in-demand sectors. Successful applicants with selected proposals will receive the following benefits:

- Comprehensive training program on the creation, set-up and management of Digital Innovation Hubs.
- Financial support to cover the costs for setting up structures, processes and logistics in the Digital Innovation Hubs, service development/provision, staffing, equipment (i.e., facilities, websites, dissemination materials, legal and IPR consultancy services, administrative support), as well as for travel and accommodation costs.
- A Mentor in form of an already fully operational DIH, to support the mentee in networking with other DIHs, investors, innovative entrepreneurs, potential customers, etc.,
- Business development support.
- Networking with African and European DIHs, investors, innovative entrepreneurs, and ICT start-ups.
- Study trips to African & European DIHs to facilitate knowledge exchange.

### 6. Who are we looking for?

We are looking for organizations that will form a consortium (minimum of two partnering organization) to create two (2) DIHs in Nigeria. Such organisations can be, but are not limited to,

- Technology and/or Innovation Centers,
- Science, Technology and/or Innovation Hubs,
- Entrepreneurship Support Organizations (Incubators, Accelerators, Investors, etc.),
- Business Support Organizations (Chambers of Commerce, Sectoral Associations, etc.),
- Innovative companies / private Technology Providers, cutting edge technology focused Small and Medium sized enterprises (SMEs),
- Development Agencies and Organizations (Economic, Regional, SME, Industrial and/or Technological Development),
- Research & Development Organisations (R&D)
- Universities/faculties and/or university/faculty-based research centers
- Vocational Training Institutes,
- Industrial Clusters, IT-related associations/companies,
- Public or private funding/finance organizations.

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The establishment of a Digital Innovation Hub is a collaborative process that requires a clear understanding and commitment between its members. Therefore, above mentioned organisations, willing to form a consortium, in order to create and operate a DIH in Nigeria, should:

- Be willing and capable to assume the position of local digital and innovation **orchestrators** who will work collaboratively with all the other local players (e.g. governments, industry, finance sector, technology actors, academia, and social organizations), for which they must be adequate and recognised by these players.
- Have a high degree of **technical and sectoral expertise** and understanding on how to **apply this expertise** (providing services), **knowledge and expertise to advise and support MSMEs in accessing different opportunities for additional funding**, as well as experience in fostering competitive enterprises in their regions.
- Ability to provide the necessary (complementary) expertise and knowledge to establish an effective and well-functioning DIH. Applicants can have complementary digital or non-digital technologies specialization areas.
- Serve the interest of the general public and not (primarily) to support profit-making interests.
- Provide services to MSMEs to support their digital transformation and innovation.
- Willing to **collaboratively** operate the DIH.

### 7. What are the potential services and activities of a Digital Innovation Hub?

An indicative overview of potential services and activities offered by a DIH to its clients and partners are listed in the following:

	Services	Activities
<b>Ecosystem Building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community building</li> <li>• Skills, training, education</li> <li>• Strategy development</li> <li>• Ecosystem learning</li> <li>• Representation, pro-motion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scouting, brokerage, awareness creation, dissemination, ecosystem building</li> <li>• Market intelligence, market assessments, road-mapping, technology watch</li> <li>• Workshops, seminars to share knowledge and experience</li> <li>• Representing interests during meetings &amp; conferences, organizing (country) visits, roadshows</li> </ul>
<b>Test before Invest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic R&amp;D Contract research</li> <li>• Technical support on scale-up</li> <li>• Provision of tech infrastructure</li> <li>• Testing, measuring and validation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint, pre-competitive R&amp;D, secondment from companies</li> <li>• Specific R&amp;D, technology concept development, proof of concept</li> <li>• Concept validation, prototyping, small series production</li> <li>• Renting equipment, low-rate production, platform technology infrastructure, Lab facilities</li> <li>• Certification, product demonstration, product qualification</li> </ul>
<b>Find Investment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incubator/accelerator support</li> <li>• Access to finance</li> <li>• Project development</li> <li>• Offering housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voice of Customer, market assessment, business development, legal. IPR, location, sales strategy</li> <li>• Financial engineering, connection to funding sources, investment plans</li> <li>• Identification of opportunities, creating consortia, development of proposals</li> <li>• Office space and space for experimentation and pilot manufacturing</li> <li>• Concept Validation and specific Product Measuring</li> </ul>
<b>Skills &amp; Training</b>	Specialized courses on ecosystem/technology/business, strategy development on topic education	

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### 8. Eligibility Criteria?

To enter into the application process for the creation of Digital Innovation Hubs in Nigeria, applications subject to this call for proposals need to meet the following eligibility criteria:

#### 1. Consortia Eligibility Criteria:

- a. Applications must be presented by consortia consisting of a minimum of two (2) organizations.
- b. The consortium members must have at minimum an internal agreement to enter into the creation of a Digital Innovation Hub aiming a public benefit, under the following principles:
  - That it is created with the mission to support companies in their digital transformation.
  - That it is created to serve the interest of the general public and not (primarily) to support profit-making interests.
  - That the DIH's activities will not give rise to more than incidental economic benefit to the Consortium, its partners or affiliated entities.
  - That it does not compete with existing commercial offerings.
  - That it has identified the roles and responsibilities of its consortium members.
- c. The consortium's purpose must include the provision of services to small businesses to support their digital transformation and innovation.
- d. Each consortium members must have minimum five (5) full time staff collaborators and the partnership consortium overall must have at least ten (10) full time staff collaborators.
- e. The consortium members must have complementary expertise in technology, application area and financial capacity to create the hub.

#### 2. Digital Innovation Hub (DIH) Project proposal Eligibility Criteria:

The DIH will have a dedicated specialization area, in either:

- a. Green Economy (Ag. Tech, circular economy and clean tech) or
- b. Any other in-demand sector

### 9. What is the foreseen Timeline?

The Call for Proposal opens on September 28th, 2022. The Deadline for submitting applications is November 11th, 2022, 23:59:59 hours (WAT). After the Call for Proposal is closed, submitted applications are evaluated. The most promising proposal are pre-selected (see section 13) and invited to a Bootcamp where they undergo training on the concept of Digital Innovation Hub. Applicants will submit an updated proposal after the bootcamp. The updated proposals are evaluated, and the best proposals are selected.

### 10. How to Apply?

The Call for Proposal opens on 28th September 2022 and closes on 11th November 2022, 23:59:59 hours (WAT time). During this period, applicants can submit their proposal. Proposals are to be submitted through the [DTC Nigeria website](#) within the stated deadline. Proposals submitted by any other means than the Submission Form will not be considered eligible.

The Submission form consists of 6 sections. The first 3 sections refer to the basic identification of proposals. Meaning, the (lead) applicant needs to indicate his official name as an organisation, name of the pro- posed Digital Innovation Hub in the prepared proposal, as well as e-mail address of contact person, which will be used for official communication between the entity submitting proposal and DTC Nigeria project.

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The next 3 sections are reserved for the upload of relevant proposal documents, namely Application Form, Supporting documents and Partnership Agreement. All sections have instructions concerning format and size in which they need to be submitted. The Application Form needs to be submitted as a pdf document and cannot be

larger than 2 MB. Supporting documents ([see section 14.a of this document](#)) are uploaded as a single compressed archive, either with extension .zip or rar, and with maximum size of 16 MB. Partnership Agreement needs to be submitted as a pdf document, with maximum size of 2MB. All sections of the Submission Form are mandatory.

Once all fields in the submission form are filled out, and before the (lead) applicant is able to submit the proposal by selecting the “APPLY Now” button. Applicants are encouraged to submit their proposals a few days prior to the submission deadline to avoid any potential problems during the submission process.

All sections of application form need to be filled out in order for the proposal to be eligible. The data provided should be up to date, truthful, exhaustive, as well as consistent and should allow for a complete assessment of the proposal.

For any proposal submitted, the lead applicant for a consortium, acts as the main contact with the DTC Nigeria project. It is the (lead) applicant's responsibility to ensure the timely submission of the proposals. Final submissions of proposals are only allowed to be made by a representative of the lead applicant in order to avoid duplicate submissions.

A proposal can only be submitted once. Any modifications of the proposals after the submission are not possible and will not be taken into account. We thus advise applicants to thoroughly review their proposal, as well as use the checklist in the application form before submitting.

### 11. What kind of application support does the DTC Nigeria Project offer?

In order to support applicants in this process, the DTC Nigeria project will offer certain support services:

#### A. Regional Stakeholder Engagement

Following the launch event on September 28th, 2022, the DTC Nigeria project will hold physical engagement sessions in Abuja, Rivers State, Kano State and Enugu state to socialise the call to varied audiences of stakeholders and answer key questions.

#### B. Virtual Information Sessions

Following the regional stakeholder engagement, the DTC Nigeria project will offer additional information sessions. The information provided in the launch event. The sessions offer interested parties the opportunity to address open points directly with the DTC Nigeria project team and clarify open questions. Participation in the launch event or the virtual information sessions is neither mandatory to be selected nor will it in any circumstances automatically lead to the proposal being selected.

#### C. Weekly consulting session

In the timeframe 24.10.2022 to 09.11.2022 the project will offer a weekly consulting session. During this timeframe, applicants can book up to two timeslots, 30min each, to ask questions. The sessions will be held weekly on Tuesdays and Wednesdays in the timeframe 10am to 1pm WAT. Registrations for timeslots will be accepted either through a Contact Form on the Call for Proposal website up to 48 hours prior to the actual meeting. In order for the DTC Nigeria team to prepare and provide effective advice, we kindly ask applicants to include the topics to be discussed in the registration form. Participation in the launch event, the virtual information session as well as consulting session(s) is neither

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mandatory nor will it in any circumstances lead to the proposal being automatically selected.

### 12. Can an applicant be part of more than one consortium?

Applicants and proposal partners can only be part of one consortium. In case a member is part of two consortia both proposals are automatically excluded from the evaluation process.

### 13. What happened if I do not submit my application within the deadline?

Applications after the deadline will not be accepted. We strongly encourage applicants not to wait until the last minute to submit their proposals. Failure of meeting the submission deadline for any reason, including extenuating circumstances, will result in the rejection of the proposal.

### 14. How will we evaluate your proposal?

The evaluation process is transparent, fair, and equal to all our participants. For this Call for Proposal, we are looking for the best fit for our project, and since we put emphasis on quality rather than quantity, we suggest applicants to put effort into presenting their proposal in the best possible way, providing as much detail as they can to support the DTC Nigeria project while evaluating applications and identifying the main key points and their fit with the overall Digital Innovation Hub (DIH) scope. The evaluation of the proposals will be performed through the steps explained in the following points:

#### A. Administrative & Initial Eligibility Check

The administrative check is performed internally by the DTC Nigeria project team. During the administrative check of proposals, the following will be assessed:

- Whether the proposal was submitted before the deadline.
- Whether the proposal complies with the “eligibility criteria”. Proposals that do not comply with the eligibility criteria will be rejected.
- Whether the proposal package meets all the criteria set out in the checklist of the application form (see below):
  1. The correct application form, prepared for this Call for proposals, has been used.
  2. The application form is filled in using word-processing software, digitally readable and in English language (font: Arial 11).
  3. The Declaration by the (lead) applicant has been filled in and signed.
  4. The Declaration of partners has been filled in and signed by all partners.
  5. Partnership agreement between the lead applicant and all partners in the proposal is signed and stamped by all partners and enclosed.
  6. Supporting documents as part of the initial package of documentation are enclosed, namely:
    - Scanned copy of Tax registration certificate with the Tax Identification Number with the state inland revenue service.
    - Scanned copy of evidence of tax clearance for 2020.
    - Scanned copy of the certificate of incorporation for the lead organisation (for business entities and non-profit organizations).
    - Scanned copy of the audit report for 2020<sup>3</sup>.
  7. The proposed (physical) location for the Digital Innovation Hub must be in Nigeria.

If any of the above information is incorrect or any specified document is missing, the proposal

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<sup>3</sup> Please note that selected proposals/applicants are obliged to submit their audit report for 2021 at the later stage of the application process.



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will be rejected solely on the ground that it has not met the administrative check. The proposal will thus not be further considered.

### B. Quality Check

Each submitted proposal having passed the administrative initial eligibility check will be evaluated by at least two (2) independent qualified external evaluators, (referred to as evaluators from here on). Each proposal will be evaluated separately and independently by two evaluators. The score of individual proposal can amount up to 100 points. Proposals will be evaluated within the following awarding criteria:

**RELEVANCE:** Extent to which the proposal clearly addresses specific and actual needs of MSMEs in their digital transformation process, opportunities for reinforcing and securing the digital innovation ecosystem in the region, its forethought to potential challenges, its alignment with the objectives of this call, as well as the proposal's ability to foster private sector development through tackling market failures and other major challenges, which hamper digitalisation of MSMEs.

**CAPACITY:** This criterion assesses, whether the lead applicant has sufficient capacities, experience and technical expertise to ensure an effective, efficient and impactful implementation and management of the project. In addition, it also evaluates the proposed organisational structure, as to the degree to which it is beneficial to the achievement of the proposal's objectives.

**EXPERTISE:** This criterion evaluates the expertise of the consortium, meaning its members' maturity, capacity, and experience, including the one in its specialization areas. It moreover assesses the teams' qualifications to participate and carry out the work to set-up the DIH, the soundness of their participation proposal and the resources provided for it. In summary, the criterion assesses, if applicants demonstrate a clear understanding of DIH and outline either already existing or a clear pathway to develop required (digital) capacities to successfully manage and operate a DIH.

**APPROACH:** Assesses the viability of the implementation, in terms of coherence and clarity of proposed work plan, ability to reach target group, set-up to deliver results and outcomes, as well as achievability of milestones and deliverables. Identified complementarities and synergies between the partners are also evaluated regarding their contribution to the project implementation. Lastly, the proposed activities and services are reviewed to determine the extent to which they are conducive to achieving the intended results.

**BUSINESS MODEL:** Evaluates the viability and long-term sustainability of the proposed business model, including financial plan, sales strategies for services and activities and ideas to attract additional private or public funds.

**PUBLIC BENEFIT:** Extent to which, the proposed DIH contributes existing local and regional policies and strategies in the areas of digitalisation and innovation according to the DIH's technological capabilities and specialisation areas, as well as strengthens the competitiveness of its target users resulting in benefits for the society, improve the employment conditions and activate entrepreneurship, build digital capacity, and contribute to the creation of a regional digital innovation ecosystem.

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### Evaluation Table

Section	Max.score
<b>1. Relevance</b>	<b>15</b>
1.1. How relevant is the proposal to identified problems/challenges in targeted sectors/areas of operation/location/regional contexts?	5
1.2. How relevant is the proposal to defined target group / users of services?	5
1.3. How relevant is the proposal to the achievement of the goals of the Call for Proposal and the overarching DTC Nigeria project?	5
<b>2. Overall operational and management capacity</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1. Lead applicant (and Consortia partners) has sufficient experience and technical expertise in project management.	5
2.2. Lead applicant (and Consortia partners) has sufficient <u>management capacity</u> (including staff, equipment and ability to manage a DIH).	5
2.3. Proposal clearly describes how the proposed DIH will be organized and how its structure will look like. Proposed DIH structure seems appropriate for the envisioned activities and goals.	5
<b>3. Thematic expertise and capacity</b>	<b>25</b>
3.1. Proposal clearly describes the context in which the proposed DIH will operate (initial situation, core issues and challenges clearly defined)	5
3.2. Applicant has sufficient initial knowledge base/skills set and experience, related to DIHs envisioned services.	5
3.3. Proposed partners and external cooperating structures have sufficient initial knowledge base/skills set and experience, related to DIHs envisioned services. Respective strengths of partners are sufficiently illustrated and synergies in the cooperation is evident.	5
3.4. Applicant, proposed partners and external cooperating structures have sufficient infrastructure and equipment available to set-up/offer DIHs envisioned services.	5
3.5. Applicant and proposed partners demonstrate a clear and robust added value for the target group/service users. User/beneficiary base is described in detail (quantified, localized, etc.)	5
<b>4. Approach</b>	<b>25</b>
4.1. Proposal sufficiently describes the role of proposed DIH in respect to 4 main pillars of services as defined by the EU concept on Digital innovation hubs – test before invest, skills and training, support to find investment, and innovation ecosystem and networking.	5
4.2. Activities related to management, institutionalization and sustainability of proposed DIH are appropriate, practical and consistent with the described role of fully functional proposed DIH.	5
4.3. Activities related to development of DIH's services are appropriate, practical and consistent with the described role of a fully functional proposed DIH.	5
4.4. Activities related to positioning the DIH as recognizable institution (one-point-of-contact) for support to MSMEs and other users in related digitalization and innovation frame of work are appropriate, practical, and consistent with the described role of a fully functional proposed DIH.	5
4.5. Activities related to establishment of synergies and complementarities on a level of DIH members, as well as on local, regional, national and international level are appropriate, practical, and consistent with the described role of a fully functioning proposed DIH.	5
<b>5. Business model of proposed DIH and sustainability</b>	<b>10</b>
5.1. Business model of proposed DIH realistically ensures overall sustainability of DIH beyond the phase of support coming from DTC Nigeria project?	5
5.2. Proposal includes information on other fundraising and development approaches, that will be pursued to increase chances of long-term sustainability and functionality of the proposed DIH.	5

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6. Public benefit and added value	10
6.1. Proposal sufficiently elaborates its contribution to public benefit and/or existing policies and strategies in the areas of digitalization and innovation, environment and green economy, the promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities or the needs of people with disabilities and other marginalized groups?	5
6.2. Proposed consortium has or has identified collaborations that can be regarded as beneficial for creation of a network of digital innovation hubs in the country, Africa and/or Europe or creation of mutual inter-exchange leading to product or results of added value both for in- volved parties and/or their users?	5
<b>Maximum scoring</b>	<b>100</b>

The evaluators will score each award criterion on a scale from 0 to 5:

- 0 = Proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information
- 1 = Poor – criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses
- 2 = Fair – proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses
- 3 = Good – proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are pre-sent
- 4 = Very good – proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of short-comings are present
- 5 = Excellent – proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Anyshortcomings are minor.

Each evaluator will produce an Individual Evaluation Report. The final score will be calculated as an average of the individual assessments provided by the Evaluators.

If the total score of one of the evaluation criteria is less than 50% of the possible points, the proposal is rejected. If the scoring is zero (0) or 1 (one) for at least one of the subsections within sections 1-6, the proposal will also be rejected.

### C. Training Bootcamp

The top 8 DIH consortia will be pre-selected and invited to a training boot camp where they undergo training to provide more information about the concept of Digital Innovation Hub. After the boot camp, the pre-selected DIH consortia would have two weeks to work on and submit a refined proposal.

### D. Final Evaluation

The evaluators will re-evaluate the updated proposal submitted by the 8 pre-selected consortia based on the established awarding criteria (See "Quality Check" and "Evaluation Table")

After re-evaluating the proposals, the evaluators are invited to a "Consensus Meeting" to present their analysis to the DTC Nigeria project team and justify the scoring according to each criterion above. This provides the opportunity to adjust the scoring or come to a consensus if there are significant deviations in the scoring.

If the difference in scoring between two evaluators in individual proposal is above 30% then a third evaluator is invited to evaluate specific proposal. All three evaluators are subsequently invited to an additional meeting at which a final decision on the number of points is made.

In case of ties, the following criteria will be used to rank the proposals, in order:

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- First: Capacity Score
- Second: Expertise Score
- Third: Relevance Score
- Fourth: Approach Score

Based on the scoring of all submitted proposals, a ranking list of proposals is generated. The list ranks all proposals according to achieved score (descending list from top-most score) and classifies them into **recommended** (top 2 ranked proposals), **reserve** (proposals achieved a score of 60 or more but below top 3 ranked) and **rejected** (proposals scored less than 60 points or rejected for any other justifiable reason).

### E. Full Eligibility Check

Full eligibility check is performed internally by the DTC Nigeria team and refers only to applicants, whose proposals are classified as **recommended** after administrative and quality check. Those applicants will be invited to submit **supporting documentation**. These proposals will potentially be supported by the DTC Nigeria project and therefore **MUST** provide all necessary documentation for contracting purposes. The (lead) applicant is required to pass a record of commercial and legal eligibility check, which includes among other things:

- The existence of an electronic bookkeeping system.
- Existing time recording system.
- Records of income and expenditure as well as proper annual financial statements.
- Existence of written rules for procurement of goods and services.
- Existence of internal and external controls.

**Remark:** DTC Nigeria Project reserves the right to request from the consortia any additional document to those mentioned above, if relevant for contracting purposes. Additionally, the project may conduct a visit to applicants if found necessary to verify facts/situation presented in the proposal.

### Steering Committee

The 3-man Steering Committee will assess recommended proposals that positively met all 3-step evaluation check process and grants final approval regarding direct support to those proposals by the DTC Nigeria project. The Steering Committee might have valid reasons for objecting to a specific application, like the alignment with DTC Nigeria project's goals and scope, the ability to achieve the highest impact possible, as well as the existence of significant ethical concerns, or a potential conflict of interest. All concerns will be checked for validity on an individual basis, and if determined positive, will be reflected in the final ranking list of proposal.

### 15. Conflict of Interest

DTC Nigeria is aware that a **conflict of interest** may occur as a result of economic interests, political or national affinities, family or emotional relationships, or any other common interest. If there is a conflict of interest in at least one of the above categories, the connection needs to be explained to the DTC Nigeria project.

The consortium must declare that they will, without any delay, inform the Contracting Authority about any situation that might be considered as a conflict of interest or a situation that might lead to it. Also, the consortium must declare that:

- The lead applicant and partners are not commercially affiliated institutions/business entities, nor are they directly connected by ownership for economic interests.

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- The Partners are not mutually commercially affiliated institutions/business entities, nor are they directly connected by ownership for economic interest.

In cases where Consortium is made of Organisations for Public benefit that are linked to each other on non-economic basis (linked by foundation, board membership, and similar), this is not an automatic elimination criterion, however, such linkage needs to be explained in dedicated sections of the Application form (Information on the Lead Applicant and Partners; Declaration of partners; Declaration by the Lead Applicant), and is to be evaluated by the project on case-by-case basis.

Finally, the lead applicant for the consortium confirms that he has signed a form of Partnership Agreement with other partners, in accordance with the instructions set out in this Guide for Applicants (see chapter 14 (a) Administrative and initial eligibility check). Additionally, affiliated entities and employees of the DTC Nigeria project are not permitted to take part in this Call for Proposal.

### 16. Communication Flow

Applicants will receive communications after the administrative and the quality check of the evaluation process indicating if they have been pre-selected or not. A communication will be sent to applicants rejected two weeks after the evaluation process is completed.

### 17. Contracting

After the evaluation of the proposal is completed and selected DIH have been notified, selected consortia need to sign and submit a letter of intent as a legal basis for the cooperation, outlining their commitment to the project. Afterwards a commercial and legal eligibility check will be conducted, including a review of the supporting documents in order to prepare the contracts. The contracting phase ends with the signing of a MoU, as well as contracts between GIZ and the lead applications.

### 18. Complaints

Applicants are kindly requested to please take into consideration that the evaluations are run by qualified trained experts, and there is no interference in their assessment. Therefore, complaints related to the results of the evaluation will not be considered other than the possible mistakes in the evaluation of the first automatic eligibility criteria.

Applicants have three (3) working days to submit complaints starting from the day after the communication was sent. DTC Nigeria will review the complaint within no more than seven calendar days from its receipt. If more time to assess the complaint is required, DTC Nigeria will inform the applicant by email about the extension. DTC Nigeria will not review anonymous complaints as well as complaints with incomplete information.

Nevertheless, if after receiving the results of one of the evaluation phases (when foreseen), the applicant considers that a breach has been committed, they may send us their complaint. To do so, please send us your complaint in English by email to [DTC-Nigeria@giz.de](mailto:DTC-Nigeria@giz.de), including the following information:

1. Contact details (including email address where to send the reply to),
2. The subject of the complaint,
3. Information and evidence regarding the alleged breach.

### 19. Final Provisions

Any matters not covered by this Guide will be governed by DTC Nigeria. Applicants are kindly requested to please take into account that DTC Nigeria makes its utmost effort to keep all provided data confidential; however, for the avoidance of doubt, applicants are solely responsible to indicate any confidential information as such. Any Intellectual Property Rights will remain the

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applicants' property.

Providing data is voluntary, although it is necessary to participate in the Open Call. Without providing your data, it is not possible to contact you and evaluate the application. If you have any questions please reach us at: [DTC-Nigeria@giz.de](mailto:DTC-Nigeria@giz.de).

The DTC Nigeria project might cancel the call at any time, change its provisions or extend it. In such a case, DTC Nigeria will inform all applicants about such changes. The signature of the Agreement is an initial condition to establish obligations among any applicant and any Consortium partner, with respect to the confidentiality of the application.